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ABSTRACT

This paper offers a plan for increasing communication effectiveness in organizational setting through a team building approach. The first section of the paper provides a scenario that places team building in an organizational development context and presents a detailed description of a team building process used to increase communication effectiveness, along with other outcomes. The second section of the paper contains a case study outlining the use and results of the process with a specific work group. (FL)

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"Using Team Building to Increase Communication Effectiveness in a Changing Environment"

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Abstract

The paper uses a case study approach to examine the dynamics of improving communication in work relationships through a team building intervention. Communication constructs are discussed in terms of their importance for organizational survival in a changing environment. A model for the implementation of a team building strategy is presented and discussed.

Presented at the International Communication Association Annual Convention, Acapulco, Mexico, 1980

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is two-fold: build a scenario for increasing communication effectiveness through team building; and trace the evolution of the process as it is used by one work group. Therefore, the paper is divided into two distinct segments. The initial segment places team building in an organization development context, and contains a detailed description of a team building process used to increase communication effectiveness, along with other outcomes. The latter segment contains a narrative outlining the use and results of the process with one work group, often quoting from the meeting summaries written by team members. Necessary background information is included to set the stage for the case.

This paper is not intended to be the be-all and end-all on team building. Many authors have written extensively on the topic, and I recommend their work. The paper represents only one of many possible scenarios for team building, and contains some of my biases, which are based on my experiences. Thus, some difficult dilemmas are undoubtedly presented and purposely left for the reader to resolve. Finally, although the title focuses on team building and communication effectiveness, the "bottom line" in most organizations is increased productivity. Therefore, the theme of improving a team's ability to perform is the underlying (and unstated) reason for team building.

PART I

TEAM BUILDING IN AN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

One way of looking at OD is to perceive OD as a step-by-step process resulting in overall increased organizational effectiveness. The following diagram, developed at a University Associates Seminar (1978), illustrates the progression of the process.

	Personal	Group	Organization
INTRA	1 Training Coaching Management Development	3 Team Building	5 Planned Adaptation Environmental Change
INTER	2 Training Coaching Management Development	4 Team Building	6 Planned Adaptation Environmental Change

Note that two steps precede any team building activity: the intrapersonal dimension; and the interpersonal dimension. The intrapersonal dimension may be composed of such things as - being aware of one's own competencies, knowing one's own inadequacies, knowing and understanding one's own values, being comfortable with one's self, etc. The interpersonal dimension may be composed of such things as - listening skills, decision-making skills, management skills (planning, controlling, etc.), giving and receiving feedback constructively, etc. Thus, prior to beginning a team building workshop with a group, one must assess the state of the system to determine whether some intra/interpersonal training is needed by the group members to make the team building procedure useful.

Without adequate training before team building is attempted, the team building session can take one of two roads.

First, the session can become a training session in inter/intrapersonal skills or awareness. There are a number of problems present at this point. People who gathered together for a "team building" session may be confused by the emphasis on skill building. The consultant may become frustrated by the lack of appropriate involvement/participation, or by the inadequate implementation of the "final" outcomes. The participants, caught unaware, may be hurt by the perceived surprise attack on their method of operation. Without the necessary interpersonal skills, the norms necessary for successful team building are probably impossible to achieve. The development of norms such as openness, supportiveness, cooperation, active participation, and trust require the existence of certain interpersonal skills and beliefs/values.

Second, the "team building" session can end up being used as a means to assess the intra/interpersonal competencies of the members of the group. There are problems here also. Many methods are available for checking intra/interpersonal competencies, and few, if any, are in a more threatening setting than team building. The results of threat on the necessary norms for good team building are obvious. People are rarely open, trusting, supportive, cooperative, active participants when threat is perceived. Therefore, the need for a careful assessment of the group members and their relationships with one another ought to precede any team building effort and, if necessary, the members should receive training/coaching prior to the team building effort to increase the chances for a successful intervention.

One other major aspect which ought to be checked before deciding on team building is - does this group of people need to function as a team? Perhaps an analogy may facilitate understanding this issue. A basketball team and a track team are both groups of people. However, the track team is not a "team" as used here, but a basketball team is a "team."

Basketball Team (TEAM)		Track Team (GROUP)
High	(Interdependence)	Low

DECISION MAKING
STRUCTURE
COMMUNICATION PATTERNS
LEADERSHIP
ACCOUNTABILITY

A "team" has a charter which justifies its existence as a team. A "team" has some commitment to group decision making. On a basketball team, one person's decision to change the play affects the performance of all the other members of the group. Similarly, the structure of the team has an impact on all members of the basketball team, but little, if any, on the track team. "Teams" are also characterized by highly interdependent communication patterns. Basketball teams depend on constant communication for well-executed plays, but track team members rarely can help or hinder one another by communicating or not communicating. Leadership on a basketball team facilitates cooperation, but the primary leadership function in track is to polish individual skills. The above not withstanding, the most important distinction between a group and a team is the extent to which the group is held accountable for its actions as a team or individually. Teams are held accountable as a group, not as individuals. Many people

contribute to a lost basketball game, but only one person can do something about missing in the high jump.

The following is a scenario for a team building process, which is based on the principles outlined above.

SCENARIO

The Request

This process originates only upon the request of the client system. The client contact usually indicates in a memorandum or phone call that he/she perceives some problem which he/she feels cannot be resolved through normal organizational procedures. The contact is usually for one of three reasons.

- Something was discussed in a training class which he/she perceived to be helpful for solving a problem in some part of his/her system.
- He/she has been referred by another consultant in the organization who could not handle the project.
- He/she has been referred by another manager who found the process beneficial.

Gaining commitment and accurately identifying the level of commitment are critical to the success of a developmental program. By working only upon request, one can be assured of at least moderate initial commitment. Furthermore, the request implies the client contact

recognizes a problem which he/she needs help to resolve and ascribes some modicum of credibility to the consultant or the contact wouldn't have been made.

Recognizing that "politics" play an important role in organizations, the initial contact occasionally comes from two or three hierarchical levels above the potential client group. These contacts must be acknowledged. One should meet with this person and discuss the problems which he/she feels exist. However, the request for assistance must come from a member of the client group, not someone two or three levels up. This insures that the client contact is a member of the group. Managing the bad feelings of a client contact who has been instructed to call the consultant is easier if the consultant can talk directly with him/her and not have to rely on a middle man.

Initial Meetings with the Client Contact

The objective of the first meeting is to reach agreement on certain minimum criteria, or discontinue the project. The criteria are: a willingness to allow one to collect data from team members; a commitment to spend up to three full days together away from the job; a recognition of the high probability for initial discomfort; the willingness of the leader to be "coached" in the process; recognition that either party can terminate the process at any time, with a provision to spend up to half a day explaining why; and a mutual understanding that, based on the data collected, a new contract may be negotiated.

The meeting consists of three stages. The perceived problem is discussed. This gives the consultant some preliminary data about the scope and direction of the project. Based on this discussion, some of the minimum criteria may be modified. This discussion forms the basis for the four or five question interview guide used while interviewing the team members. Next, the consultant explains the team building process from data collection through follow-up. The possible benefits of a team building experience such as increased openness, trust and honesty among team members are outlined. Potential problems are also discussed. For example, completely open discussions may cause extreme discomfort for some group members, three days off the job is three days lost forever, and the leader must take responsibility for the success or failure of the project. Finally, there are two possible outcomes - either a basic contract exists, or the project is discontinued. The contract is not necessarily a written document.

A second meeting is held with the client contact one to two weeks later to outline some specific details like scheduling interview time and the dates for the experience. The reason for the delay is so that both parties have a second chance to think about the project. Therefore, the second meeting constitutes a recommitment to the project.

Data Collection

One to two hour interviews are used to collect data from each member of the team. Data is collected in five areas:

- What types of problems are the group members having that impede working as a team?
- Why do those problems exist?
- What keeps each team member from being as effective as possible?
- What are the positive aspects of the team?
- What changes would make the team more productive?

The interview should be done as close to the start of the team building experience as possible. Team members typically begin experiencing anxiety soon after they are interviewed. The anxiety has, at least, three sources. How will people react to what I said? Will they know it's me? What are they saying about me? The less time these anxieties have to fester, the less time is needed to process them away during the team building experience.

At the beginning of the interview, each interviewee is briefed on the nature of the interview and how the data will be reported to the team. They are asked to not say something in the interview that they don't want other team members to see (names are never attached to statements). At the end of the interview, the interviewee is given the consultant's notes to check for accuracy and to remove any potentially damaging information. No formal report is constructed from the collected information. Rather, the notes on each topic are transferred directly to flipchart paper to be posted in the meeting room for the team to analyze.

Along with supplying data for the team, the interviews provide further information to use in determining the consultant's role. Based on what is said on and off the record, one can gauge the degree to which the dyadic relationships between team members are open/closed, trusting/distrusting, honest/dishonest, etc. Given this information, together with the meetings held with the team leader (contact person), one defines the consultant's role somewhere on a directive-nondirective continuum. This role is never cast in concrete, but having an initial position that can be clearly stated assists the team by clarifying their expectations of the consultant.

Coaching and Briefing Session with the Team Leader

The continuation of any positive effects of the team building process depends primarily on the team leader. Therefore, some of the most important time with respect to the success of the project is spent coaching and briefing the leader. One point emphasized throughout the coaching sessions is preparing the leader to react positively in situations conducive to defensiveness. Many times, the frustrations of the team are originally directed at the leader, whether deserved or not. The success of the three days often hinges on the leader's ability to accept even undeserved (in his/her perception) criticism openly and deal with it nondefensively. When this initial "dagger throwing" is handled well, the remaining time is more productive.

In this team building design, the team leader conducts all the meetings. Why? The less directly involved the consultant is in the actual meetings,

the less the team will be dependent on him/her after the project. Furthermore, the team leader has an opportunity to indicate a willingness to change by testing new behaviors. Therefore, the leader is coached regarding the points discussed by Jay Hall (1971) in "Toward Group Effectiveness." The general thrust is to be open to other positions, avoid adopting win-lose strategies, seek concensus not compromise, be suspect of easy agreement, and build on the ideas of others. As the project moves forward, the leader and consultant continue to work closely together.

All the team members must understand and recognize the need for the close contact between the leader and the consultant. By openly acknowledging the closeness of the relationship, a precedent for openness is set and the possible impact of the suspicion caused by "secret" meetings is eliminated. The more forthright the behaviors leading into the project, the greater the probability for success.

The Team Building Meeting(s)

The team leader opens the first meeting by reviewing the goals of the meetings as he/she sees them. The leader should spend some time outlining the decision-making process to be used during the group's problem-solving process. He/she should also emphasize the need for openness and honesty during the meetings, and do his/her best to overtly remove the fear of negative sanctions for open, honest behavior.

The consultant then outlines the role that he/she will be fulfilling (at least to begin with). This role may be directive or nondirective,

but the role must be clearly articulated early in the process to eliminate as much confusion as possible regarding the team's expectations for the consultant. The choice of style is based on three criteria:

- What style is most comfortable for the consultant?
- What is the maturity level of the team?
- How confident is the consultant in the leader's ability to create an appropriate climate?

Whenever possible, the consultant should use the style with which he/she is most comfortable. This helps create a more confident appearance, which may help anxious team members. The comfortable style also takes less effort, thereby freeing energy to be used in helping the team. The consultant is less likely to inadvertently change the role if he/she is already using the comfortable role. The maturity level refers to the adequacy or inadequacy of the intra/interpersonal skill clusters of the team members. The lower the skill levels, the more directive the consultant needs to be. (At some point in time earlier in the process, the consultant must determine whether enough skills are present to make the team building experience worthwhile.) High interpersonally competent groups require much less, if any, direction. Schein's (1969) process consultation mode may work best with highly competent groups. Since the leader is going to "run" the meetings, the better he/she is at facilitating openness, supportiveness, cooperation, participation and trust, the less directive the consultant needs to be.

Before delving any deeper into the process, the team should discuss their feelings and expectations for the meetings. A number of ways exist to initiate the discussion. The team may fill out a four or five-item questionnaire about the meetings, or an exercise which requires the group to work together may be used. In the first case, the answers are shared and discussed, and in the second, the team may discuss the problem-solving process or analyze the content of the discussion. Dyer (1977) discusses this start-up phase in his book, Team Building: Issues and Alternatives.

The next phase is very important. The team is charged with the task of writing a charter which defines their reason for existing as a team. Along with the charter, the team determines short and long-term objectives. This sets the stage for the problem-solving process.

The problem-solving process can be summarized as a six-step procedure:

1. Data Reduction
2. Problem Identification
3. Problem Prioritization
4. Action Planning
5. Plan Evaluation Method
6. Feedback on the Process

The team leader is responsible for guiding the team through the process. Some prior coaching may be necessary. In some cases, a step-by-step agenda may be a good initial starting point. The consultant's role may be directive or nondirective. Either way, he/she needs to be alert to the exclusion of certain members, dagger throwing, leaving problems without solutions, etc. The solutions should also be clearly related to the objectives set forth by the team.

If the team building process is successful, the team and its members should have solved many of the problems which were impeding their progress toward the stated objective(s), developed a better understanding of each other and their roles, developed a problem-solving process which may be used again, and improved their ability to communicate with each other by creating a more open, supportive and trusting environment.

FLOW DIAGRAM: TEAM BUILDING PROCESS

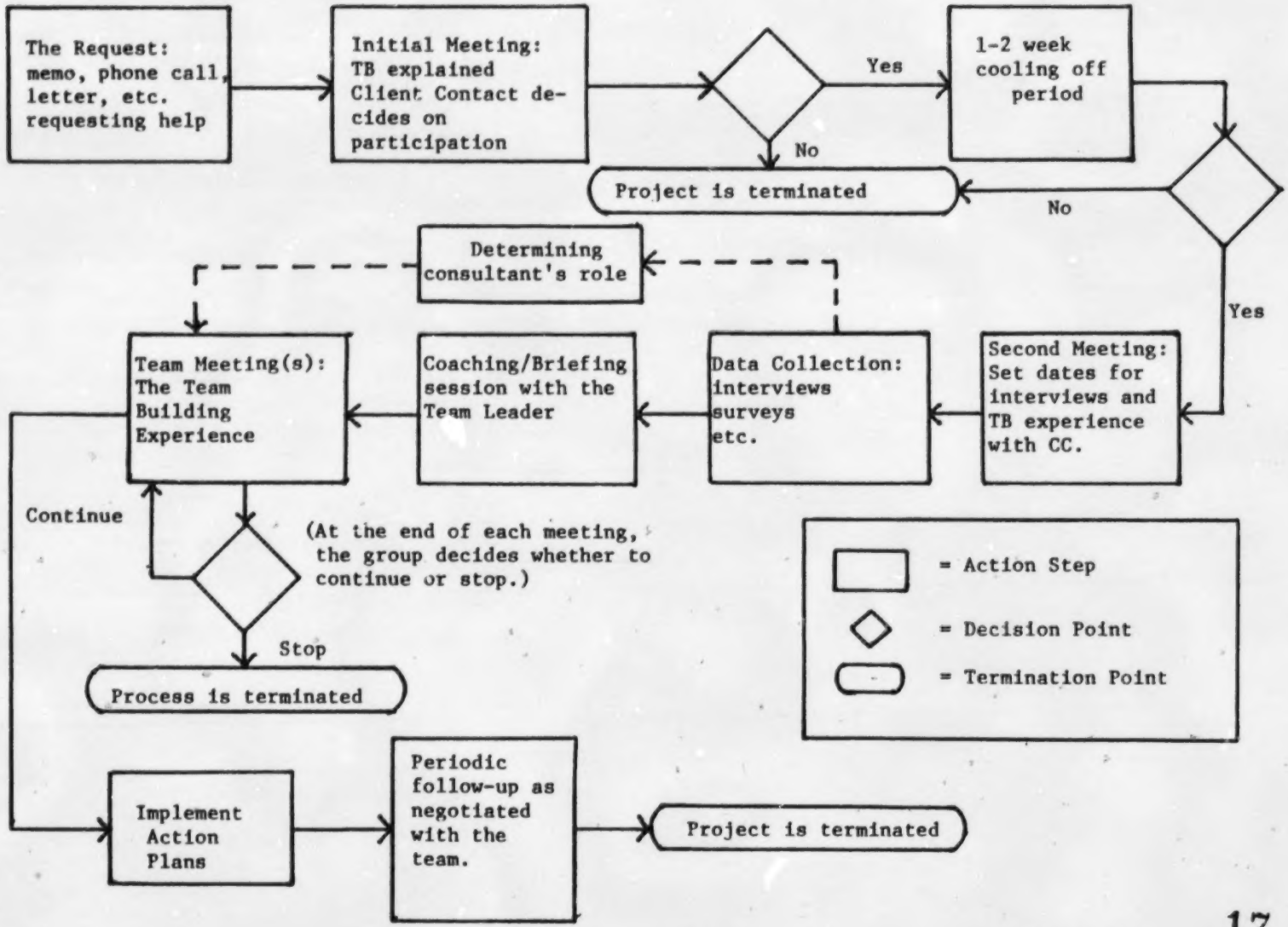

The Request: memo, phone call, letter, etc. requesting help
Initial Meeting: TB explained Client Contact decides on participation
Yes
No
1-2 week cooling off period
Project is terminated
No
Yes
Determining consultant's role
Team Meeting(s): The Team Building Experience
Coaching/Briefing session with the Team Leader
Data Collection: interviews surveys etc.
Second Meeting: Set dates for interviews and TB experience with CC.
Continue
(At the end of each meeting, the group decides whether to continue or stop.)
Stop
Process is terminated
= Action Step
= Decision Point
= Termination Point
Implement Action Plans
Periodic follow-up as negotiated with the team.
Project is terminated

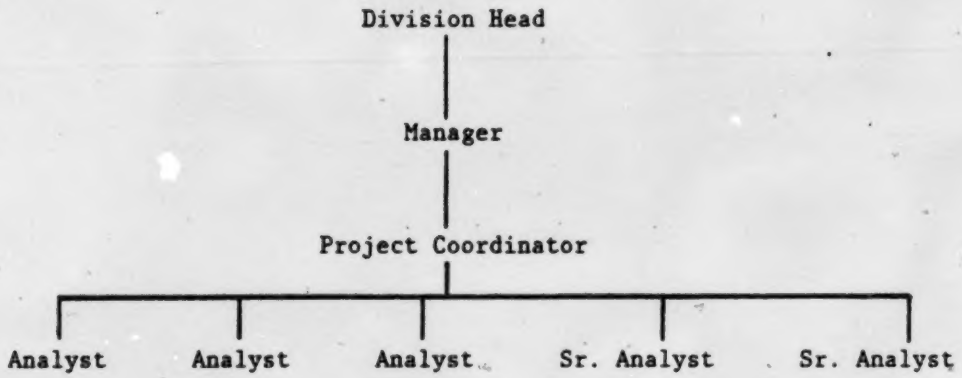
Figure 1

PART 2

BACKGROUND

The company, a medium sized insurance firm, was one of several testing a new processing system for improving company performance. A separate division was set up to develop and implement the new system. This division was staffed by people from various operating groups. Within the division, project teams were established for the implementation of the three phases. The implementation of each phase required the co-operation and coordination of several divisions within the company. The project team responsible for the first phase encountered some very tough opposition and a generally "rocky" road. The first phase was partially implemented approximately six months after the original target date.

The team involved in this project was responsible for Phase 2 and included one project coordinator, two senior analysts and three analysts. The manager of the department containing the team also chose to participate. A diagram of the official work relationships would look like:



THE CASE

Request

In mid-April of 1979, the project coordinator (P.C.) contacted me by phone to learn more about the team development program I had mentioned in a training class in March. We discussed the potential benefits of the program for his/her team. We concluded the conversation with an agreement that he/she would discuss the possibilities of the program with his/her boss, the manager. Should they wish to proceed, we would set up a meeting to discuss the project in more detail.

In late April, I received a memorandum from the manager (Appendix A) requesting a meeting to discuss the team building program. Attached to the memo was a copy of the P.C.'s memo outlining the five expectations he/she had for the program (Appendix B), and his/her request to meet with me for further preliminary discussions.

Initial Meeting

As a result of the manager's memo, we set up a meeting for May 16. During the meeting, I outlined the project in terms of five steps: data collection; data feedback and issue identification; working through the issues; development of an ongoing mechanism; and follow-up. I also outlined the minimum criteria, including time commitments.

We discussed their perception of the problems for most of an afternoon. We agreed that a team building workshop would address their concerns. They felt that the potential benefits outweighed the loss of time. However, we agreed to a cooling off period to reflect on the meeting. Before the next meeting, which was scheduled for May 31, the P.C. was to check for the feelings of the team, and the manager was to clear the project with the division head.

Second Meeting

On May 31, the P.C. and I met to determine the next step. He/she reported that everyone from the division head down was committed to making the project work. With that in mind, we scheduled the project from the interviews through the end of the team building workshop (Appendix C). We intentionally left one day between the data collection and the first workshop meeting. This short delay allowed me to record the data on flipchart paper, and make a preliminary assessment of the data. Based on that assessment, I could define my role and outline a possible agenda to set up some structure for the first meeting. The interim day would also allow me to meet with the P.C. to do some coaching around the suggested agenda.

Interviews

The week before the interviews, the team members received an article, "The Hows and Whys of Team Building" by H. Kent Baker (June 1979 - Personnel Journal), to familiarize them with the concept of team

building. The interviews consisted of two parts. First, we discussed the concept of team building as outlined by the article. Second, I asked each person the same six questions. In order to insure consistency among the interviews, I used a brief interview guide (Appendix D). The interviewees were asked to check my notes for accuracy following the interview.

In my introductory remarks, I stressed that I didn't want to hear anything that he/she was unwilling to share with the group. This removed the potential for biased feelings on my part caused by data not known to everyone. Such a practice lessens the probability for team members to disown the data. If the consultant doesn't manage the data collection carefully, he/she can be placed on the horns of a tough dilemma - do you identify who made a volatile remark, or let the program slide and bring the accuracy of the data into question. Therefore, I tried to restrict the amount of "off the record" data as much as possible.

Once the interviews were concluded, the data was recorded on flipchart paper. The data was taken directly from my notes as approved by the team members. The data was grouped by question and not reduced in any way. That task was left for the team during the first workshop meeting.

Data Preview/Coaching With the P.C.

Since the P.C. would be expected to chair the workshop meetings, we met to look at the data and discuss his/her role in managing the next day's process. By doing this, the P.C. was not shocked or startled by the

data at the meeting, and spent the available time preparing a positive means for handling the "negative" data. To that end, the rough agenda was presented to the P.C. as a starting point for the first meeting. We discussed the agenda (Appendix E) and made some adaptations based on the P.C.'s insights. Most importantly, we agreed that, although the agenda presented one problem-solving format, the group would be allowed to modify the format if it became too cumbersome.

Once we had come to a mutual understanding of our roles and the agenda, the discussion turned to whether the team should be informed of the agenda before the meeting. The P.C. was concerned that the team would be suspicious of our meeting if he/she did not share the agenda. He/she felt that sharing this information would help establish a norm of openness which could be carried through. Therefore, we decided that he/she would share the agenda with the team as soon as our meeting broke up, and that he/she would incorporate their ideas as the workshop progressed the next day.

The Workshop Meetings

The P.C. called the session into being shortly before 9:00 AM, June 27. He/she spoke briefly of what he/she hoped the meetings would accomplish, reiterating the objectives he/she outlined in his/her April memorandum to the manager. He/she further stated that openness and honesty were important to the process and that team members should respect others' opinions and try to understand others' views.

The consultant's role was described as being primarily nondirective. My comments were restricted to "process" observations and occasional "process" suggestions. I would refrain from delving into the specific job-related content of the discussions, as that was outside my level of expertise. Finally, I urged the team members to challenge me, if they felt I was off base. However, I assured the team that I would continue to comment on repetitious "process problems" when I saw them, regardless of the team's response.

A questionnaire was used to break the ice (Appendix F). The P.C. led a discussion of the questionnaire, which, overall, indicated moderately positive expectations for the meetings. Specifically, the team indicated some confidence of real change resulting, a high interest in working the issues, some skepticism with respect to others' willingness to change, and some belief that people would share real concerns. Through the discussion, the team members discovered that they had some common perceptions and agreed to "do their best" to be open to change and honest about their concerns.

The team then wrote a charter and specified their goals: 1) to implement Phase 2 in line with the target date; and 2) to develop personally to facilitate upward advancement within the team's structure. I reminded the group that any solutions arising out of the meetings should address one or both of the team's objectives.

The P.C. then called everyone's attention to the data which had been posted on the walls of the room. He/she suggested that everyone take

a half-hour or so to read the data and begin identifying possible common themes. Members took turns writing on the flipchart as the team listed the common themes in the data. The list was then grouped according to issues the team can resolve, issues someone else must work, and issues that are not open to change. The items in each list were prioritized according to importance.

The problem-solving format was used on the most important issues from each category, upon suggestion of the consultant. The format was closely adhered to until Step 4. Step 4, as it evolved, had one person (rotated) assigned to take notes and then write a summary outlining the decisions. The notes were checked during the meetings and were written up after each meeting and distributed to each team member. Step 5 was modified greatly. The team designed a rotating system of control responsibility for some issues and a central calendar to serve a control function for other issues. Step 6 was eliminated all together at the request of the team and replaced by ongoing process observations with a summary statement at the end of the day.

Each of the next two meetings went increasingly smoother. After the first day, the format changed very little. So little, in fact, that the changes don't bear mentioning.

Results/Discussion

The major issues discussed by the team over all three days centered around two themes: communication and role/responsibility clarification.

The discussion here will concentrate on the communication dimension as much as possible, recognizing that there are overlapping concerns.

The largest concern felt by the team was that there was an inadequate means for disseminating information picked up at meetings or classes, and also team members were unable to provide each other appropriate input prior to certain meetings. The group resolved to (quoting from June 27, 1979 meeting report):

1. Develop and post a central calendar containing all members' scheduled meetings. This can be viewed by team members and, if they weren't asked to the meeting, gives them an opportunity to provide or request information through those who may be attending the meeting, or request to go to the meeting.

   The calendar is to include all scheduled meetings, education, vacation and personal time off.

2. Passing information to team members after a meeting or class by:

   a. Summarizing or highlighting what took place at the meeting in writing and giving each team member a copy.

   b. Reviewing the highlights of the meeting with all team members as soon as possible.

   A control group made up of team members is to monitor these steps. It was decided that one team member per month will monitor the steps for keeping the team informed. The person scheduled to monitor the steps for the subsequent month will be backup to the person monitoring the current month. " " is scheduled for July. " " is scheduled for August.

   It is the responsibility of each team member to ensure they keep the schedule up-to-date, by supplying or requesting information from other areas.

   Requests for information should go through proper channels. However, once the request is made, the team members assigned to supply or acquire the information should meet with the party supplying or requesting the information to clarify what is needed. This clarification should eliminate the loss of information when requests are only communicated through channels.

The team also noted that there seemed to be a concern about the misunderstanding of certain assignments. To respond to this concern, the team agreed that assignments would be reviewed by the P.C. and other appropriate team members before approximately ten percent of the product is completed. This procedure was to ensure that the product was on the right track early in the project.

The team also decided to change their system regarding team meetings. It was decided to (quoting from the June 27 report):

- Allow any team member to call a team meeting to pass on information or request input from team members.
- Schedule a team meeting for every two weeks. An agenda sheet will be posted which will allow any team member to post an agenda item they would like presented at the meeting. If no agenda items are posted, the meeting will be canceled.
- Keep tone of meetings at a professional level.

This process greatly opened up the meeting system and set the stage for a fuller disclosure of information and a more rapid disbursement of information.

The team also expressed a concern about the lack of feedback with respect to the decisions made by other teams within the division which impacted on the team's objective. The team felt that when their objective was affected they needed to have input into the decision. The manager agreed to serve as the team's liaison to the other division teams to ensure team involvement when the decisions made would affect their objectives.

Regarding outside areas (not within the division), the team expressed some concerns. The primary question was how to handle incoming and outgoing requests for information (quoting from the July 2, 1980 meeting report).

> It was decided that as long as the request being made involved information that we had already agreed to provide, we would complete the request. However, if the information being requested necessitated new research and excessive time, we would have those requests channeled through the project coordinator. Hopefully, this procedure will help establish credibility for future involvement with outside groups for Phase 2 implementation.
>
> Also, it was agreed that any request made by the team for data processing support would be directed through the designated supervisor.

This process was felt to improve the team's dealings with outside groups by standardizing the method. The team felt this structure was necessary to avoid having to handle requests through informal channels, which frequently proved to make waves and caused some bad feelings between the team and the outside groups the team needed for support.

Summary

The communication concerns were first addressed by the project coordinator in his April 26 memorandum. The importance of effective communication to the performance of the team became the major thrust of the team building workshop, because the interview data reflected that concern. Through the team building workshop, the team was able to identify and resolve their communication concerns. Furthermore, the team became more open, honest and supportive in their communication

with each other. In the end, the team had established high participation and a trusting and cooperative environment in which to work. However, lest one begin to think of team building as a panacea, it must be acknowledged that, in the beginning, there were many hurt feelings, "daggers thrown," and even some tears shed. Yet, little is ever gained where nothing is risked. The group's feelings were reflected in the concluding statement from the July 9, 1980 meeting report.

> "The overall feeling is that the past three meetings have been most beneficial, but now comes the real test of their value, when we must practice what we've preached."

Acknowledgments: The editorial contributions of Cookie Conger were greatly appreciated. My thanks also go to the team, who graciously allowed me to use their experience in the preparation of the case.

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Appendix A

M E M O R A N D U M

April 27, 1979

TO: Mr. Dorian Conger

cc: "Project Coordinator"

FROM: "Manager"

SUBJECT: Team Development Programs

P.C. has expressed an interest in having his section participate in the Team Development Program. Since I am not familiar with what all is involved in this program, we would like to sit down with you to discuss it further.

Please let me know when would be convenient for you to meet with us.

Thanks.

Attachment

MEMORANDUM

April 26, 1979

TO: "Manager"

FROM: "Project Coordinator"

SUBJECT: Team Development Programs

Training and Development is offering courses designed to aid areas that work as a team to achieve higher performance.

In reviewing the course descriptions, I believe they can help the team be more effective by:

1. Increasing sense of commitment to the team outcome.
2. Improved performance of the work team.
3. Better understanding of each other's roles within the work team.
4. Increased levels of trust and openness between members of the work team.
5. Increase the effectiveness of planning efforts.

However, before we participate in the team development programs, we should meet with Training and Development personnel to discuss in more depth what is involved and what approach we should use.

Appendix C

M E M O R A N D U M

June 5, 1979

TO: Mr. Dorian Conger

cc: "Team Members"

FROM: "Project Coordinator"

SUBJECT: Team Development Program

Attached is the schedule for the interviews and team meetings required for the team development program.

Attachment

TEAM DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

Individual Interviews With Dorian Conger

Monday - June 25, 1979

Place: Dorian's office

8:00 - 9:00	"Sr. Analyst"
9:00 - 10:00	"User Analyst"
10:00 - 11:00	"User Analyst"
11:00 - 12:00	"User Analyst"
1:00 - 2:00	"Manager"
2:00 - 3:00	"Sr. Analyst"
3:00 - 4:00	"Project Coordinator"

Review Interview Issues

Tuesday - June 26, 1979

Place: Dorian's office

11:00 P.C. and Conger

Team Meetings

Date	Time	Place	Purpose
6-27-79	8:30 - 4:30	To be announced	Discuss and prioritize issues.
7-02-79	8:30 - 4:30	To be announced	Walk-through and resolve issues.
7-09-79	8:30 - 4:30	To be announced	Walk-through and resolve issues. May not be needed.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTRO: If you read the article, you probably have a pretty good idea about the process we'll be using. Do you have any questions?

Since you and the other team members will be looking at the data, it is imperative that you be willing to discuss what you tell me openly with the other members. If you aren't willing to openly discuss something, let's not talk about it here.

At the end of the interview, you will have a chance to go over my notes to check the accuracy. If you want to change something, we'll make adjustments or delete things entirely.

What kinds of problems are you having operating as a group?

Why do you think those problems exist?

What keeps you personally from being as effective as you would like?

What do you like best about this team - things you'd like to continue?

What changes would make you and this team more effective?

How could this group begin to work more effectively together as a productive team?

FIRST MEETING: (beginning agenda) Start 8:30 AM

A. P.C. Review the goals of the three meetings as he sees them, and the need for team development. Emphasize his support of the program. Reaffirm the norm that no negative sanctions are intended for open, honest behavior.

B. Dorian The role of the consultant, i.e., what will I be doing?

C. Fill out questions about feelings toward the meetings.

1. P.C. records data on flipchart as each person calls out their answers.

2. Discuss why the profile is where it is, and what can be done to increase the positive orientation toward the meetings? Discuss for 20 minutes, then summarize results.

3. Determine appropriate action.

D. P.C. First task is to ask the group to write a charter; what is our objective as a team? P.C. leads the discussion.

E. P.C. Call attention to the data which are on the walls. These are the data we chose to share with each other. Our task is to:

1. Identify common themes in the data;

2. Place them in the summary categories;

Summary Categories:

a. Issues we can resolve in these meetings.

b. Those issues that someone else must work (and identify who the others would be).

c. Those issues that are apparently not open to change - things that we must learn to accept or live with.

3. Prioritize those in Categories a, b and c.

F. Problem-Solving Format

1. Begin problem-solving process for the major items in a, b then c: define the problem;

2. Work out action plan: 1) set a goal (short and/or long range); 2) identify helping and hindering forces; 3) develop plan to remove refraining forces; 4) determine what action is needed from whom to implement and improve effectiveness;

3. Determine means for evaluating the success of the plan, and set an implementation time schedule in line with the goal;

(Dorian will be making observations and comments about how we work together during this process.)

4. Each person summarizes in writing and orally what his or her assignments are with respect to the given plan;

5. Form a two or three person task group to monitor the implementation of a given plan;

6. Check with Dorian and each other for feedback on the process;

7. Move to the next item.

G. End for the day some time between 4:30 - 5:00.

"ICE BREAKER"

1. How confident are you that any real change will result from these meetings?

1	2	3	4	5
Not confident at all		Some Confidence		High Confidence

2. To what degree do you feel the people really want to be here and work on team-development issues?

1	2	3	4	5
Don't really want to be here		Some interest in being here		High interest in being here

3. How willing do you think people are to actually make changes that may be suggest?

1	2	3	4	5
Will be unwilling to change		Some willingness to change		Very willing to change

4. How willing do you think you and others will be to express real feelings and concerns?

1	2	3	4	5
Not very willing		Some degree of willingness		Very willing

(Dyer, 1977)